

<b>POLICE/SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT</b>		<b>GENERAL ORDERS</b>	
<b>SUBJECT: Bomb Incidents</b>		<b>NUMBER: 2-25</b>	
<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999</b>		<b>REVIEW DATE:</b>	
<b>AMENDS/SUPERSEDES: GO 2-25, January 1988</b>		<b>APPROVED: _____ Chief of Police/Sheriff</b>	
<b>CALEA STANDARDS: 46.1.6</b>		<b>VLEPSC STANDARDS: OPR.05.05</b>	

## **NOTE**

This order is for internal use only, and does not enlarge an officer's civil or criminal liability in any way. It should not be construed as the creation of a higher standard of safety or care in an evidentiary sense, with respect to third-party claims. Violations of this directive, if proven, can only form the basis of a complaint by this department, and then only in a non-judicial administrative setting.

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## **INDEX WORDS**

Bombs  
Dispatcher responsibilities (re: bomb threats)  
Explosions  
Searches (for bombs)

## **I. POLICY**

Bomb threats and actual bomb emergencies present a serious threat to officers, the public, and to property. Recently, more bombings of public and private buildings have occurred in the United States than at any time this century. Law enforcement must be able to respond effectively to all bomb threats to ensure the public safety. Additionally, officers must be able to properly investigate bomb threat/bomb emergencies in order to apprehend those responsible. Officers shall display caution when responding to any bomb call: the evidentiary procedures that follow the discovery of a possible bomb or incendiary device are dangerous. For the purpose of this order, a bomb threat or an actual detonation includes a class of offenses including arson, a detonation of a device which emits hazardous or noxious fumes or gas that threatens the health or safety of citizens, or extortion based on threats of assaults with explosives.

## **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this order is to establish procedures for handling bomb threats and actual bomb emergencies.

### III. PROCEDURES

#### A. Initial response

1. The on-scene supervisor shall have the authority to implement this plan and shall assume command of the operation until relieved by the chief of police/sheriff or any other appropriate higher authority.
2. Bomb threats shall be investigated by patrol officers, while actual bombings require the assignment of investigators. The on-scene supervisor may call out the investigator if the threat involves extortion or terrorism. See GO 2-14, investigations.
3. Other agencies
  - a. If a possible explosive device is located, contact the Virginia State Police hazardous device technician.
  - b. For removal of any identified *military* chemical or explosive device, contact the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Unit at ***[ give location and telephone number ]***.
  - c. Contact the FBI if a bombing or explosion has occurred. Bomb blasts in schools or at federal installations shall be investigated by the FBI.

#### B. Duties and responsibilities of dispatcher

The duties and responsibilities of the dispatcher receiving a bomb threat/bomb emergency call include the following:

1. Obtain as much information as possible such as:
  - a. the bomb's exact location;
  - b. the time set for detonation;
  - c. a description of the bomb;
  - d. the type of explosive or bomb; and
  - e. the reason for the bombing.
2. Notify and dispatch the chief of police/sheriff (if a bombing occurs) to the scene.

C. Duties and responsibilities of the on-duty supervisor

Upon notification by the dispatcher, the on-duty supervisor shall respond immediately to the scene. Radios and cellular phones shall be turned off. Additionally, the supervisor shall perform the following procedures:

1. Assess the situation and make a determination to notify command personnel, investigators, or FBI.
  - a. If a call back of additional officers is necessary, the dispatcher shall be instructed to do so per GO 2-22, unusual occurrences.
  - b. Determine what outside agencies shall be notified or whose assistance must be requested such as fire, rescue, hospitals, the FBI, and the Virginia State Police.
  - c. If a bomb is found, have the dispatcher contact the Virginia State Police.
2. Interview the person who received the original call. All details, such as the caller's voice, mannerisms, background noises, and the time shall be noted. The time the call was received is most important since many bombs are activated by a watch or clock which restricts the bomber to a 12-hour period or less. Play back the tape recording of the bomb call, if one was made.
3. Instruct officers about traffic control in the general area.
4. Establish a security perimeter around the scene.
5. Coordinate the tasks of arriving outside agencies.

D. Duties and responsibilities of investigator

1. Upon arrival at the scene, the investigator shall assume responsibility for the completion of the preliminary investigation and begin a follow-up per GO 2-14.
2. If an actual explosion has occurred, detailed investigation and crime scene processing shall await the arrival of the Virginia State Police or FBI, as appropriate.

E. Evacuation

1. Upon receipt of a bomb threat, the building management must make the final decision to evacuate. The role of law enforcement is to provide information

and recommendations which the management officials may use in making the evacuation decision.

2. If the decision is made to evacuate the building, officers may assist in the process.
3. If a building search reveals an explosive device, the on-scene supervisor shall order and organize and evacuation of the building.
  - (a) If a possible explosive device has been found, officers shall open all doors and windows in its vicinity before evacuating.
4. All persons shall be evacuated to a distance of at least 300 yards from the bomb site. Elevators shall not be used during evacuation.
5. The on-scene supervisor shall set up a perimeter around the bomb site and shall prevent **anyone** from entering until bomb technicians have removed or defused the device.

F. Searching the premises

1. The decision to search a building is also a management decision, with officers providing recommendations. Since building employees are most familiar with the building and the space therein, part of the building management responsibility includes helping police/fire building search teams.
2. When the decision to search has been made, the on-scene supervisor shall designate search team(s) as needed, depending on the size of the area to be searched.
3. Officers shall coordinate the search to avoid repetition. Care shall be exercised, however, to impress upon the searchers the importance of not disturbing any suspected bomb that may be located. A floor plan of the building shall be obtained and made available for immediate reference.  
*[Note: Explosive detection canine teams can be obtained through the State Police.]*
4. All areas open to the public shall be given special attention first: restrooms, trash receptacles, stair wells, elevator shafts, boiler rooms, fire extinguisher cabinets, and supply closets. Custodians shall be directed by their own supervisors, with law-enforcement assistance, to check their closets and storage areas for any unusual objects, and supervisors shall ask their subordinates to check their work areas for unusual objects.

5. Nothing shall be done to change the environment of the area searched, such as turning on light switches or thermostats until the area has been searched thoroughly using flashlights. **Do not use radios and do not smoke** when approaching or searching the area.
6. Never tell management personnel that their building contains no explosive devices. Tell them that the search revealed nothing, but let them make any decisions concerning re-occupation of the building.
7. If a search reveals an unusual device or bomb, officers shall not try to disarm or move it in any manner. The explosive may contain an anti-disturbance device and should be approached only by explosive experts. The main concern is to safeguard lives by isolating the area. If a suspected bomb is found, the dispatcher shall contact the State Police, the Explosive Ordinance Disposal Unit at *[include telephone or pager number here]*. A disposal team shall respond to handle the device with all necessary equipment to remove and destroy the bomb.

G. Communications

1. Due to the danger of possible bomb detonation from radio transmissions all police radios at the scene shall be turned off.
2. Communications between the supervisor and dispatch shall be by telephone or an officer can be sent several blocks away to transmit messages using the radio.

H. If an explosion occurs

1. The on-scene supervisor shall seal off and protect the area while the investigator and the Virginia State Police arrive to begin scene processing.
2. Officers shall attend to injured persons.
3. The on-scene supervisor shall allow only emergency equipment and necessary personnel onto the scene. With the exception of investigators and emergency rescue personnel, no one shall be permitted to enter the scene for one hour following the explosion.
4. The on-scene supervisor shall assume that there are secondary devices that could be detonated and shall advise all arriving personnel of this possibility.

I. After-action report

1. All responding personnel shall complete reports on each bomb threat/bomb emergency. The on-duty supervisor shall coordinate the reports: the initial

responding officer shall complete an incident report and all other officers shall contribute supplements to it.

2. The on-scene supervisor shall complete an after-action report and shall forward it to the chief of police/sheriff, giving a chronology of the incident and offering recommendations, if appropriate.